

## i've found (the right stuff) by pally (palliris)

**Series:** [do you feel it? \[5\]](#)

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** ., Here u go, Introspection, M/M, Profanity, as always, uh, umh, yeah - Freeform

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Max (Stranger Things), Steve Harrington

**Relationships:** Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2017-11-04

**Updated:** 2017-11-04

**Packaged:** 2022-04-02 14:36:38

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,060

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

“Why is someone like you going out with Billy, anyways?”

## i've found (the right stuff)

### Author's Note:

this wasn't the Regularly Scheduled Fic for today, but this is what y'all are getting (the one i had planned for today should still go out tomorrow) this is also the shortest (and will probably remain so) of all of the series, so yeah, sorry not sorry [it works, okay]

thank you so much to everyone commenting !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! i love you guys so much, y'all repeat-offenders on all of my fics make me want to die (in a good way) (lov yall < <33)

kudos and comments very dearly appreciated!! also i love hearing what u guys would like seeing in fics, if u wanted to put that in a comment i'd definitely consider writing it haha

"Why is someone like *you* going out with Billy, anyways?" Max asks him one day, all attitude and gangly limbs of a growing kid. Her arms are crossed and her face *looks* cross.

"Um."

Steve really doesn't know what to say. He had been distantly, vaguely aware of Max's knowledge of how Billy and Steve now passed the time, but had never thought she would bring it up so plainly.

Her face is set and determined, so Steve knows he can't bullshit his way out of a response.

"He's not so bad," he starts slowly, scratching the back of his neck as he leans against his car. A year ago he might've thought he looked cool or edgy, but all he can feel is the increasingly noticeable sense that he's flailing on the inside right now. "He's not, um. Billy's different, now."

Max snorts. "I could tell."

Glancing back at the doors to the middle school and wondering why the kids couldn't be done with AV club any quicker, Steve wrings his hand nervously.

"And we aren't dating," Steve says abruptly, because they really aren't. Sure, Billy stays at his house more often than he does his own, and Steve actually left a toothbrush and hairspray over at Billy's the other day, but-

Max laughs, long and hard. It sounds grating against his ears in a way he can't quite help but hate, and she claps her hands together in her mirth.

"Aren't-" Max tries, but starts giggling again. "Steve, you're literally *wearing one of his shirts right now*. How could you *possibly* say you aren't dating?"

And yeah, of course, Steve's luck is just that fucking bad because that's when Dustin decides to pop up out of thin air, their side's bumping together when the kid collides into him. There's a wild look on his face, pure joy and carefree wonder. It's simultaneously refreshing and terrifying.

"You got a girlfriend, Steve? C'mon man, I thought we had a loverless pact!" Dustin cries indignantly. A pout forms on his face and, well, Steve *really* can't say no to that.

"Nah," he replies, all easy-going tones and expression despite the fact that he feels like he's combusting on the inside. Steve doesn't even know why he's so petrified of it all getting out; just that he is.

(Yeah, no, he knows *exactly* why he doesn't want it getting out. Steve just doesn't want to admit it.)

"So you really aren't dating anyone?" Dustin asks when they are both packed into Steve's car, all of the other carted into the Wheeler family ride. Dustin's voice sounds meek, and he pauses to look over at the kid. There aren't any tears or anything, so he isn't too worried, but Steve still knows Dustin wrings his hands together when he's anxious. Bad-anxious.

“Well, there *is* something,” Steve admits, watching the way Dustin both perks up and deflates, all at once. “But it’s not really, um. Dating.”

And then Dustin’s eyes go slim and sly, like he’s in on a joke that Steve isn’t. He doesn’t get what the kid is playing at until he wings out his arm and starts jabbing Steve with his elbow, saying, “So, like, an *adult* thing? Yeah? Huh? That why you don’t want to tell me?”

*God.* Steve doesn’t know what fucking shit he did in a previous life to deserve this, but he certainly wouldn’t wish this sort of thing on anyone. Well, okay, he could probably name a few people who had been terrible enough to warrant this sort of conversation happening to them, but as of right now Steve just sinks into his seat. Hopes he can just disappear into the cushion, really.

It takes him a minute to gather up his wits, Dustin needling him the whole time.

Steve finally interrupts the bombardment of questions with a terse, “Yes; an adult thing, which is why you aren’t allowed to hear about it.”

And Dustin must hear something in his voice, because he stops asking him questions. Their arms stay pressed up against each other on the center console, though, with subtle nudging here and there. It’s kind of distracting in a good way.

Steve turns on the radio, and listens. Listens to the dull chatter, the wind coming in through Dustin’s open window, the sound of the other cars around them.

(To the sound of Dustin’s breathing, the sound of his own heart, the swish of his hair as it’s cradled by the wind.)

“If you wanted to tell me who it was, you could, ya’ know,” Dustin says later, when he’s being dropped off at his own house and Steve is clutching the steering wheel with one hand. “I’m *great* at keeping secrets.”

“Yeah, no, I’m pretty sure you definitely aren’t, kid,” Steve begins,

but stops. Chokes back a hoarse laugh at what his life has become, and coughs behind his hand. "But thanks. For, you know, the offer."

Steve leaves Dustin with a shallow wave and what he hopes is a confident expression, except all he feels is static. Dustin shuts his door with a softness Steve appreciates.

It's a slow thing; feeling, that it. It starts with a word or a phrase, then slowly settles into his pores and his skin and his muscles, but then sinks deep, deep into his bones where it can't escape. He knows he's the one trapping them there- latching on with visceral claws and refusing to let go- but he can't help himself.

Steve'd rather suffocate himself than admit he needed air.

Dustin is like a small breath of fresh air. He doesn't really have to be anything around the boy; can just be Steve. But sometimes, even that's too much.

The worst part is, Dustin *gets* that.

Before he goes inside his house, he throws one last long-suffering smile at Steve, and holds it. Without even really trying, Steve smiles back. A brief connection of tangency is formed between them. It's terrible and great and Steve doesn't really know what to do with it all, so he just lets his gaze fall and his foot feel out the gas pedal again.

Out of the rearview mirror he sees Dustin waving at him as he drives away, and laughs at what a little shit he is for thinking Steve would look back in the first place.